

<b>POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT</b>		<b>GENERAL ORDERS</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: Hostages</b>		<b>NUMBER: 2-23</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999</b>		<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-23, January 1988</b>		<b>APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff</b>	
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: 46.1.5</b>		<b>VLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.05.04, OPR.06.04</b>	

## **NOTE**

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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## **I. POLICY**

Hostage and barricade situations present extreme dangerto officers and citizens. Each hostage/barricade situation is different, but a basic plan may provide officers with guidelines to help defuse the situation safely. Whatever happens, the department expects its officers to react logically and sensibly. Above all, officers shall not fuel a hostage taker's stress but shall strive to contain or limit the situation. The paramount objective in a hostage incident is its peaceful resolution and the safe release of hostages.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this general order is to establish general guidelines applicable to a hostage/barricade incident.

## **III. PROCEDURE**

### **A. General**

The first 10-20 minutes of a hostage/barricade situation are the most emotionally charged and present the greatest danger. Stress is high both among the officers and citizens involved. Normally, there is no need to rush to a solution: time may reduce stress and allow communication to begin. Additionally, time is needed to assess the situation and to secure the surrounding area. The patrol officers who confront hostage incidents shall not undertake any tactics other than what is immediately necessary to protect lives.

B. Dispatcher responsibilities

Since dispatchers may be the first to receive information concerning a hostage/barricade situation, they shall gather as much information as possible and transmit it to officers in the field clearly and quickly so that upon arrival at the scene they are aware of the dangers. Information gathered by dispatchers shall include answers to the following questions. Try to keep the caller on the telephone until police arrive.

1. Where is the event taking place?
2. Where is the complainant calling from (number and location)?
3. What are the complainant's name and telephone number?
4. Can the complainant see the scene?
5. Are the suspects armed? With what?
6. How many suspects are there?
7. What do the suspects look like?
8. Are there any other persons involved? If so, how many?
9. Is the officer already there or approaching the scene?

C. Responsibilities of first officer and supervisor on scene

The duties and responsibilities of the first officer on the scene include the following:

1. Assess whether a hostage/barricade situation exists.
2. Inform dispatch and request the supervisor's presence and additional back-up.
3. Attempt to contain the situation at its present location.

4. Safely remove all innocent persons from the danger area. Those persons who cannot be removed immediately shall be instructed to seek protection where they are if gunfire is taking place. Briefly detain any witnesses to obtain information about the incident.
5. Inform the on-duty supervisor of all pertinent facts upon his or her arrival.
6. Assist the on-duty supervisor in gathering as much information as possible about the situation, including the following:
  - a. Suspects
    - (1) Location: floor, room, roof, basement?
    - (2) What types of weapons do they possess (handguns, rifles, hand grenades, dynamite, etc.)?
    - (3) Is the suspect a criminal (burglar, rapist), mentally ill, militant?
    - (4) Complete physical description? Mental and physical condition?
    - (5) What is the suspect's purpose?
    - (6) What crime has the suspect committed?
  - b. Hostage: physical description (age, height, weight, sex, hair, etc.)? Physical and mental condition?
  - c. Location of the incident
    - (1) Obtain interior and exterior descriptions.
    - (2) Identify all possible escape routes.
    - (3) Determine locations of service (water and electricity) connections.
    - (4) Determine in which rooms telephones are located.
    - (5) Determine if a police scanner is in the building.

D. Supervisor's responsibilities

Upon arrival at the scene, the supervisor shall assume command of all officers and shall make all appropriate decisions until he or she is relieved by higher authority. Duties and responsibilities of the supervisor include the following:

1. Notify appropriate personnel within the department and support agencies.
  - a. Notify the chief of police/sheriff.
  - b. After determining the danger of the situation, make the appropriate notifications which may include call-backs.
  - c. Calling-up of department personnel: see GO 2-22, unusual occurrences.
  - d. Ask the rescue squad to stand by in the general area.
  - e. Ask the hospital emergency room to maintain an alert to possible injuries.
  - f. Ask the fire department to stand by in the immediate area.
  - g. If appropriate, request specialized units from the State Police such as the K-9 unit, helicopter, or hostage negotiators. (To contact the State Police, see RR 1-17, jurisdiction/mutual aid). Summon an evidence technician.
  - h. Request the news media to inform the public to stay out of area. See RR 1-13.
2. Establish an inside and outside perimeter to ensure a safe area in which to operate. Assign an officer to control the perimeter.
  - a. Assign all officers within the inner perimeter to wear body armor.
  - b. Ensure that personnel within the inner perimeter maintain firearms discipline and are relieved periodically by members of a tactical team, if available.
  - c. Only officers who are guarding the hostage scene or participating in negotiations shall be permitted within the inner perimeter. Pedestrians and vehicles may be permitted within the outer perimeter as the on-scene supervisor determines.
3. Establish a command post in a safe area while maintaining observations of the scene. Assign an officer or other person to record personnel assignments and to develop a chronological log of events at the command post.

4. Arrange for the evacuation of any injured persons.
5. Arrange for and supervise the evacuation of any bystander in the danger area. If bystanders cannot be evacuated, they shall be instructed to seek protection where they are.
6. Establish communications with the suspect or suspects to determine their demands or intentions. Some guidelines to be followed in establishing communications include the following steps.
  - a. Attempt to locate relatives, friends, or neighbors.
  - b. The telephone company will assist if a telephone number is needed. See *Virginia Code* § 18.2-50.2, "Emergency control of telephone service in hostage or barricaded person situation."
  - c. If unable to contact the suspect telephonically, use the public address system or the bull horn.
  - d. Have a relative or friend converse with the suspect, but do not allow this person to enter the building.
  - e. Make every effort to persuade the suspect to surrender voluntarily before using force.

E. Special equipment

Hostage/barricade incidents may require the use of specialized equipment on the scene.

1. ***[Note: Describe any specialized equipment here and the rules for its use.]***

F. Use of force/chemical agents

Following consultation with the chief of police/sheriff, the on-duty supervisor shall authorize the use of force or chemical agents. See GO 2-6, use of force.

G. Negotiating with barricaded persons/hostage taker

Negotiation involves establishing trust between the hostage taker, requiring "give and take" on both parts. Of primary importance in establishing a dialog are the following points. Only the assigned negotiator shall communicate with the suspects.

1. In negotiating, practically all demands are negotiable except:

- a. Supplying the hostage with weapons or ammunition.
- b. Taking additional hostages or exchanging hostages.

H. Chase/surveillance vehicle/control of travel route

The on-duty supervisor shall ensure that, should the hostage taker get a vehicle, all possible routes of travel are covered by units. Additionally, surveillance vehicles may be assigned in order to observe the activities of the hostage taker.

I. De-escalation

Once the hostage taker has been captured, the following actions shall be performed:

1. The suspect shall be removed from the scene immediately in a screened unit following an extensive search of his or her person incident to an arrest. The investigating officer shall take the suspect to a place of interrogation.
2. Hostages shall be removed immediately upon capture of the suspect.
  - a. The on-scene supervisor shall alert all participants by radio that the hostages are exiting the scene.
  - b. Medical treatment shall be provided, if needed.
  - c. Find a quiet area so that hostages may be united with their families.
  - d. The on-duty supervisor shall assign the investigator to interview each hostage to obtain statements.
3. The crime scene shall be preserved until processed for evidence by officers assigned.
  - a. The area shall remain cordoned off until the on-duty supervisor declares it open.
  - b. Officers who are no longer needed shall be cleared for normal assignments by the on-duty supervisor.
  - c. Investigations shall be made into any surrounding property damage, e.g., bullet holes in neighboring building or destroyed lawns and gardens. Investigations shall include pictures.

J. After action reports

The on-duty supervisor shall submit a comprehensive report to the chief of police/sheriff on all hostage/ barricade incidents.